

BEFORE THE SOUTH CAROLINA STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

In the Matter of the)
)
Suspension of the Educator Certificate)
)
Of Joshua A. Hope)
)
Certificate 240797)

**CONSENT ORDER
OF SUSPENSION**

SUMMARY OF THE CASE

The South Carolina State Board of Education (State Board) considered this matter on April 12, 2016. On January 27, 2016, the South Carolina Department of Education (SCDE) sent notice to Mr. Joshua A. Hope that the State Board would meet to make a determination regarding disciplinary action of his South Carolina educator certificate based on the provisions of S.C. Code Ann. § 59-25-160 (Rev. 2004), for unprofessional conduct by regular and certified mail, return receipt requested. After receiving the notice, Mr. Hope requested a hearing. Prior to the scheduling of the hearing, Mr. Hope's legal counsel informed the SCDE that Mr. Hope had agreed to waive his right to a hearing and enter into this Consent Order of Suspension. Mr. Hope's educator certificate shall be suspended for a period of one day, effective April 12, 2016, and ending April 13, 2016.

FINDINGS OF FACT

The State Board has jurisdiction in this matter pursuant to S.C. Code Ann. § 59-25-150 (Rev. 2004) and S.C. Code Ann. § 59-25-160 (Rev. 2004).

Mr. Hope holds a professional South Carolina educator certificate and has over seven years of teaching experience. He has no prior record of disciplinary action with the State Board. Mr. Hope had been employed by the York County School District Four (District) since 2009 as a special education teacher at Nation Ford High School (School). Mr. Hope resigned from the District, effective June 5, 2015.

On April 17, 2015, Mr. Hope was supervising student passengers on a school bus during an approved field trip. Mr. Hope failed to supervise the students properly, allowing two special education students to engage in inappropriate sexual behavior for approximately 25 minutes. The District launched an immediate investigation in the matter and found Mr. Hope had been negligent in his duty as a supervisor. When Mr. Hope

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resigned from the District, he agreed to not return to teaching until after the State Board had rendered its disciplinary decision in this matter. Mr. Hope has complied with this agreement and has not been employed in teaching since his resignation from the District.

On January 27, 2016, the SCDE sent notice to Mr. Hope via regular and certified mail, return receipt requested, that the State Board would meet to make a determination regarding disciplinary action of his South Carolina educator certificate based on the provisions of S.C. Code Ann. § 59-25-160 (Rev. 2004), for unprofessional conduct. On February 9, 2016, Mr. Hope contacted the SCDE to request a hearing. Prior to scheduling the hearing, Mr. Hope's legal counsel informed the SCDE that he desired to waive his right to a hearing and seek an alternative resolution to this matter. Mr. Hope has agreed to enter into this Consent Order of Suspension suspending his educator certificate for a period of one day, effective April 12, 2016, and ending April 13, 2016.

Mr. Hope agrees to the suspension of his Special Education certification, subject to the following conditions: (1) his educator certificate will be suspended for one day, beginning immediately upon the approval by the State Board of the Consent Order of Suspension; and (2) he has waived his right to a hearing and understands that the terms set forth are not subject to reconsideration, collateral attack or judicial review.

CONCLUSIONS OF LAW

"The South Carolina Board of Education may, for just cause, revoke or suspend the certificate of any person." S.C. Code Ann. § 59-25-150 (Rev. 2004); S.C. Code Ann. § 59-25-160 (Rev. 2004). Just cause includes "unprofessional conduct." S.C. Code Ann. § 59-25-160 (Rev. 2004); 24 S.C. Code Regs 43-58 (2011). The State Board finds that the evidence presented by the SCDE demonstrates that Mr. Hope engaged in unprofessional conduct as a result of his failure to properly supervise student passengers on a school bus. The evidence presented supports the State Board's determination that just cause exists to suspend Mr. Hope's educator certificate for a period of one day, effective April 12, 2016, and ending April 13, 2016.

If Mr. Hope wishes to have his educator certificate reinstated at the end of the suspension period, he shall make a written request to the SCDE's Office of Educator Services, and shall meet all certification requirements in effect at the time he requests

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reinstatement. Mr. Hope shall be responsible for payment of the applicable reinstatement fee.

The suspension of the educator certificate of Joshua A. Hope, certificate 240797, shall be immediately reported to the NASDTEC Clearinghouse and all South Carolina school districts.

Now, therefore, it is ordered that the Consent Order of Suspension is accepted and the educator certificate of Joshua A. Hope is hereby suspended for a period of one day, effective April 12, 2016, and ending April 13, 2016.

AND IT IS SO ORDERED.

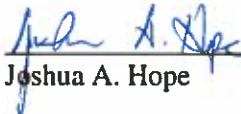
South Carolina State Board of Education

By:


Michael R. Brennan, Chair

Columbia, South Carolina
April 12, 2016

I, Joshua A. Hope, S.C. Educator Certificate 240797, understand there has been an investigation concerning alleged violations of the laws and regulations governing the practice of educator certificate holders and that I have waived my right to a hearing in this matter. I agree that during the period of suspension, I will not serve as a volunteer in any type of educator role or be employed as an educator, paraprofessional, aide, substitute teacher, coach or in any other position in a public school in the State of South Carolina. I understand that the terms set forth in this Consent Agreement are not subject to reconsideration, collateral attack or judicial review. I hereby freely, knowingly and voluntarily agree to the suspension of my educator certificate by the South Carolina State Board of Education. I agree to the proposed Consent Order of Voluntary Suspension, consisting of three pages, and understand that this Order will be presented to the South Carolina State Board of Education on April 12, 2016


Joshua A. Hope

4-12-16
Date